

Sri Krishna Kathamrita



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Śrī Gaṅgā-mahimā

The Glories of Ganga Devi



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THE MOST SACRED RIVER

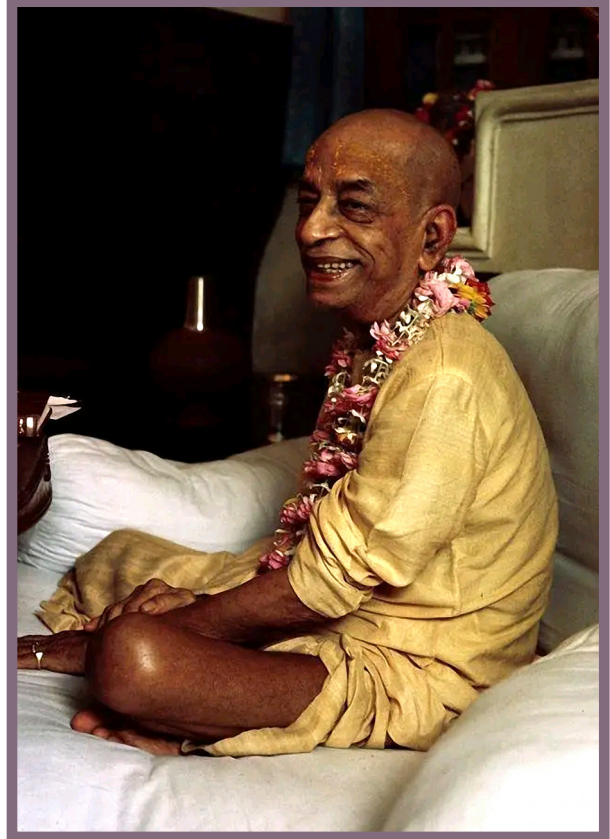


His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The river [Ganges, on the bank of which the King sat to fast] carries the most auspicious water, which is mixed with the dust of the lotus feet of the Lord and *tulasī* leaves. Therefore, that water sanctifies the three worlds inside and outside, and even sanctifies Lord Shiva and other demigods. Consequently, everyone who is destined to die must take shelter of this river. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 1.19.6)

The Lord is so kind that he has spread the River Ganges throughout the universe so that by taking bath in that holy river everyone can get release from the reactions of sins, which occur at every step. There are many rivers in the world which are able to evoke one's sense of God consciousness simply by one's bathing in them, and the River Ganges is chief amongst them.



Cover: "Indian woman floating lamps on the Ganga." by William Simpson 1867

Photo by Raghu-rai



On the bank of the sacred Ganga

In India there are five sacred rivers, but the Ganges is the most sacred. The River Ganges and *Bhagavad-gītā* are the chief sources of transcendental happiness for mankind, and intelligent persons can take shelter of them to go back home, back to Godhead. Even Sripad Shankaracharya recommends that a little knowledge in *Bhagavad-gītā* and the drinking of a little quantity of Ganges water can save one from the punishment of Yamaraj. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 3.5.41)

The water of the Ganges, the narrations of his pastimes, and the words spoken by him are all on the absolute platform, and thus taking shelter of any one of them is equally good. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 3.20.5)

It has actually been seen that anyone who regularly worships mother Ganges simply by bathing in her water keeps very good health and gradually becomes a devotee of the Lord. This is the effect of bathing in the water of the Ganges. Bathing in the Ganges is recommended in all Vedic *sāstras*, and one who takes to this path will certainly be completely freed from all sinful reactions. The practical example of this is that the sons of Maharaja Sagar went to the heavenly planets when

water from the Ganges merely touched the ashes of their burnt bodies. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 9.9.14)

Formerly, when a person died it was commonly said that he had attained the shelter of mother Ganges, even if he did not die on the bank of the Ganges. It is customary among Hindus to carry a dying person to a nearby bank of the Ganges, for if one dies on the bank of the Ganges, his soul is considered to reach the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu, wherefrom the Ganges flows. (Purport to *Cc. antya* 1.37)

India has many sacred rivers, such as the Ganges, Yamuna, Narmada, Kaveri and Krishnaa, and simply by bathing in these rivers people are liberated and become Krishna conscious. (Purport to *Cc. antya* 4.98)

When there was a meeting of great sages at Naimisharanya, Suta Goswami was reciting *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and the importance of the Ganges was stated as follows: “The waters of the Ganges are always carrying the flavor of *tulasī* offered at the lotus feet of Sri Krishna, and as such the waters of the Ganges are ever flowing, spreading the glories of Lord Krishna. Wherever the waters of the Ganges are flowing, all will be sanctified, both externally and internally.” (*Nectar of Devotion*, chapter 7) 🍌



Painting by B. K. Mitra. Gita Press, Gorakhpur. C. 1950's.

Ganga Devi descends before Maharaja Bhagirath

TIRTHA OF THE TIRTHAS



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

The dear devotees of Lord Hari, the *vaiṣṇavas*, who always worship Lord Hari, are real *tīrthas*. No *tīrtha* is greater than such a *vaiṣṇava*. Narottam Das Thakur has said:

*gaṅgāra paraśa hoile paścāte pāvan
darśane pavitra koro — ei tomāra guṇ*

O *vaiṣṇava* *ṭhākura*, if someone goes to the Ganga, touches Ganga water, he may be purified. But if he doesn't touch it, how will he be purified? But if someone is fortunate and simply sees you, then just by that seeing he becomes purified.

Vaiṣṇavas are such *tīrthas*.

When Mahaprabhu went to Gaya to offer oblations for his deceased father, he met Iswara Puri. Mahaprabhu said:

*prabhu bale, — "gayā-yātrā saphala āmāra
yata-kṣaṇe dekhilāna caraṇa tomāra*

"O Iswara Puri! My coming to Gaya is successful because you are a topmost devotee and I have seen your lotus feet." (Caitanya-bhāgavata ādi 17.50)

*tīrthe piṇḍa dile se nistare pitṛ-gaṇa
seha,—yāre piṇḍa deya, tare' sei jana*

"People generally go to this *tīrtha* to offer oblations for deceased forefathers. By reciting their names and offering oblations for your father, grandfather, great-grandfather and other relations, they can be delivered. But how many names can you utter? And how can those persons get delivered whose names you did not utter? (Cb. ādi 17.51)

*tomā' dekhilei mātra koṭi-pitṛ-gaṇa
sei-kṣaṇe sarva-bandha pāya vimocana*

"But just by seeing a *vaiṣṇava* like you, Iswara Puri," Mahaprabhu said, "Millions and millions of forefathers will immediately be delivered. You are such a great *tīrtha*." (Cb. ādi 17.52)

*ataeva tīrtha nahe tomāra samāna
tīrther o parama tumi māṅgala pradhāna*

"So the *tīrthas* are not equal to you. You are the supreme *tīrtha*. O *vaiṣṇava* *prabhu*, you are the *tīrtha* of all *tīrthas*." (Cb. ādi 17.53)

*saṁsāra-samudra haite uddhārāha more
ei āmi deha samarpilāna tomāre*



Unknown photographer

**Deity of Srila Iswara Puri at his
birthplace in Halisahara, West Bengal**

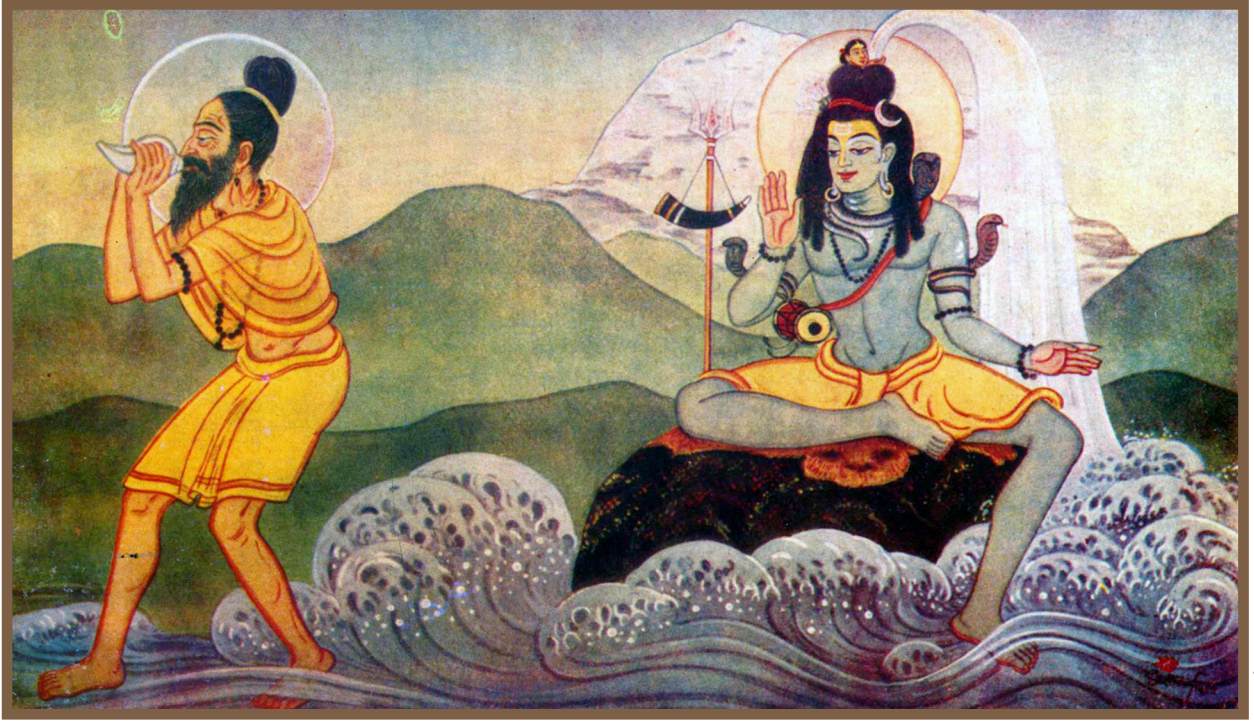
Mahaprabhu then prayed to Iswara Puri, "Please deliver me from the dreadful ocean of materialistic existence. I dedicate my body, mind, speech, and my very self completely to your lotus feet." (Cb. ādi 17.53)

Mahaprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but he shows a practical example to teach us. When one fortunately meets such a topmost *vaiṣṇava*, *premi-bhakta*, immediately he should surrender unto his lotus feet and beg for his mercy, "Please deliver me from this dreadful ocean of material existence. I surrender to you. I completely dedicate myself and everything I have at your lotus feet."

So Mahaprabhu's teaching is that *vaiṣṇavas* are supreme *tīrthas*. They are the *tīrtha* of the *tīrthas*. Because such *vaiṣṇavas*, such *sādhus*, go to places and do *bhajana* there, that place becomes a *tīrtha*. Sinful persons go to such *tīrthas* to wash off their sins. By having a dip in the holy water of that place, they think, "Our sins will be washed off." If that goes on then sins will be accumulated there



Descent of the Ganga



Unknown artist.

The appearance of Ganga Devi on the earth

as high as a Himalayan mountain. With so many sins left by the visitors, how can the place be considered a *tīrtha*? It is because *sādhus*, *vaiṣṇavas*, go there. By going there and doing bhajan, they counteract such sinful reactions. Thereby the place becomes a *tīrtha*. If one is intelligent, one who goes on pilgrimage should meet the *sādhu* by whose presence the place has become a *tīrtha*. Otherwise, what is the value of his pilgrimage? It has no value. Only spending money, time, and energy. Nothing else. 🍊

— Lecture in Tucson, Arizona. 26 May 1995.

PRAYERS TO GANGA DEVI



Kapila-saṁhitā 2.24-27

Traditional Sanskrit histories of places in India are known as “*sthala-purāṇas*”. *Kapila-saṁhitā* is one such literature, describing the history of Sri Kshetra, ancient Odisha.

*namāmi devīm pāpa-ghnīm jāhnavī-bhakta-vatsalām
trailokya-pāvanīm tvam hi raksa mām śaraṇāgatam*

I bow down to goddess Jahnavi, destroyer of all sins, kind to the devotees, and purifier of the three worlds. I surrender unto you. Please protect me!

sarva-pāpa-kṣaya-karī sarva-lokāṛta-nāśinī

pūjyā tvam sarva-devais tu tvām nato 'smi punaḥ punaḥ

You are the remover of all sins, destroyer of misery of all the worlds, and are worthy of honor and adoration by all the gods. I bow down to you again and again.

giri-jā-nātha śirasi sthitā tvam jana-pāvinī

tvām nato 'smi sthitām gaṅgām pitāmaha-kamaṇḍalau

O Ganga! For sanctifying the people, you reside on the head of the master of the daughter of the Himalayas, Lord Shiva. I bow down to you, who reside in the water-pot of Lord Brahma.

viṣṇoḥ pādābja-jām tvām hi bhagīratha-vara-pradām

praṇato 'smi mahābhāgām pāvinīm sagarātma-jān

I bow down to the illustrious goddess who had her birth from the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu, who blessed Bhagiratha with boons, and who had made the sons of Sagar sinless. 🍊

— English translation with critical study by Pramila Mishra. New Bharatiya Book Corporation. Delhi. 2005.



SACRED BATHING



We have seen that when sādhus in India take bath in sacred lakes, rivers, and tanks, they generally all show respect for the holy waters by observing certain strictures. Many different śāstras describe these basic principles for sacred bathing in similar ways. Here is a list, mostly based on the Varāha Purāṇa.

1) One should not take a sacred bath in an unclean condition or after having passed stool. If necessary one should first take bath in some other place and then take bath in the sacred waters.

2) Understanding that it is improper to take sacred bath while wearing dirty cloth, many pilgrims purchase new cloth just for bathing.

3) One should not kick the water with one's feet.

4) At the end of one's bath, one should offer oblations of the water to the demigods, sages, and forefathers. [Gauḍīyā vaiṣṇavas, however, generally offer to their guru, the previous ācāryas, the pañca-tattva, and Radha Krishna.]

5) After offering oblations, one should come out of the water and wring out one's garments away from the sacred water.

Note: Following the standard of behavior that the associates of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu exhibited when taking bath in sacred waters, the Radhakunda

श्रीकृष्णकथामृत बिन्दु

municipality prohibits washing clothes, using soap, or spitting in the waters of Radhakund or Shyamakund. 🍊

— Translated by Prabhupada Priya Sevak Das, from Pandit Madan Gopalji Sastri's Hindi translation of Narayan Bhatta Goswami's Sanskrit *Kāmyavana-māhātmya*. Published by Gaurapada Dasji Maharaja. Kaman, District Bharatpur, Rajasthan. 1994.



Painting by Pavel Sokov

Sadhu taking sacred bath in the Ganga



AFP/Betty Images

Devotees taking bath at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati Rivers at Kumbha Mela

MANTRAS FOR BATHING IN THE GANGA



Obeisances to the Ganga

navadvīpārāma-prakara-kusumamoda-balitām
sphurad-ratna-śreṇī-cita-taṭa-sutīrthāvali-yutām
harer gaurāṅgasyātula-caraṇa-reṇūḷṣita-tanuḥ
samudyat-premormi-tumula-harisankīrtana-rasaiḥ
prabhu-kriḍāpātrīm amṛta-rasa-gātrīm ṛṣi-ghaṭā-
śiva-brahmendrādiḍita-mahita-māhātmya-mukharām
lasat-kiñjalkānbhojani-madhupa-garbhoru-karuṇām
aham vande gaṅgām agha-nikara-bhaṅga-jala-kaṇām

I offer my respects to the Ganga, adorned with the fragrance of the pleasure gardens of Nabadwip. She is joined by rows of excellent bathing places whose shores are bedecked with many shining gems. Her body has been sprinkled by the precious dust of Lord Hari Gaurāṅga, and her waves of pure love have been aroused by the tumultuous mellows of *harisaṅkīrtana*. She is the worthy place of Mahāprabhu's pleasure pastimes. Immortal nectar flows in her body. Countless sages and demigods headed by Shiva, Brahma, and Indra eloquently praise her great glories. She is most merciful, and within her are lotuses with shining filaments and honeybees. I offer my respects to her, a drop of whose water destroys heaps of sins.

Mantra for Bathing in the Ganga

viṣṇu-pāda-prasūtāsi vaiṣṇavī viṣṇu-devatā
pāhi nas tv enasas tasmād ā-janma-maraṇāntikām

You are born from the feet of Vishnu. You are a *vaiṣṇavī*, and your deity is Lord Vishnu. Please protect us therefore from the offenses we commit from our birth up to our death.

Mantras for Calling Sacred Waters

When not in the proximity of sacred waters, many *vaiṣṇavas* chant the following mantras while taking bath. The first one is for calling the sacred waters and the next is a meditation. Only pure water should be used for this, and the sacred waters thus called should be shown all due respect.

gaṅge ca yamune caiva godāvari sarasvati
narmade sindho kāveri jale 'smin sannidhiḥ kuru

O Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, and Kaveri, please enter this water.

kurukṣetra-gayā-gaṅgā-prabhāsa-puṣkarāṇi ca
tīrthāny etāni puṇyāni snāna-kāle bhavantiha
pāvanākhyam saraḥ śrīmat tathā mānasa-jāhnavī
yamunā śyāma-kuṇḍam ca rādhā-kuṇḍam tathaiva ca
etāni puṇya-tīrthāni snāna-kāle bhavantiha

These holy places — Kurukshetra, Gaya, Ganga, Prabhasa, and Pushkar, the splendid lake called Pavana, the Manasi-ganga, the Yamuna, Shyam Kund, and Radha Kund — are present at the time of bathing. 🍊

— Translated by Gopiparanadhana Das, from Dina Narottam Das (chota)'s *Śrī Manohara Bhajana Dīpikā*. Published by Sri Sudhasindhu Das. Govardhan. Gaurabda 519. Bengali



Photo by Rajesh Kumar Singh of AP

Sadhus taking bath at Kumbha Mela

THE MANY FACES OF GANGA DEVI

The descent of Ganga Devi to this material world along with her mystical makara carrier (sometimes depicted as a crocodile) is a subject often portrayed in Indian art.

Unknown artist. Circa 1900 - 1915. Published by Hemchander Bhargava, Delhi



Unknown artist. Kalighat, West Bengal lithograph, c. 1840-1850.



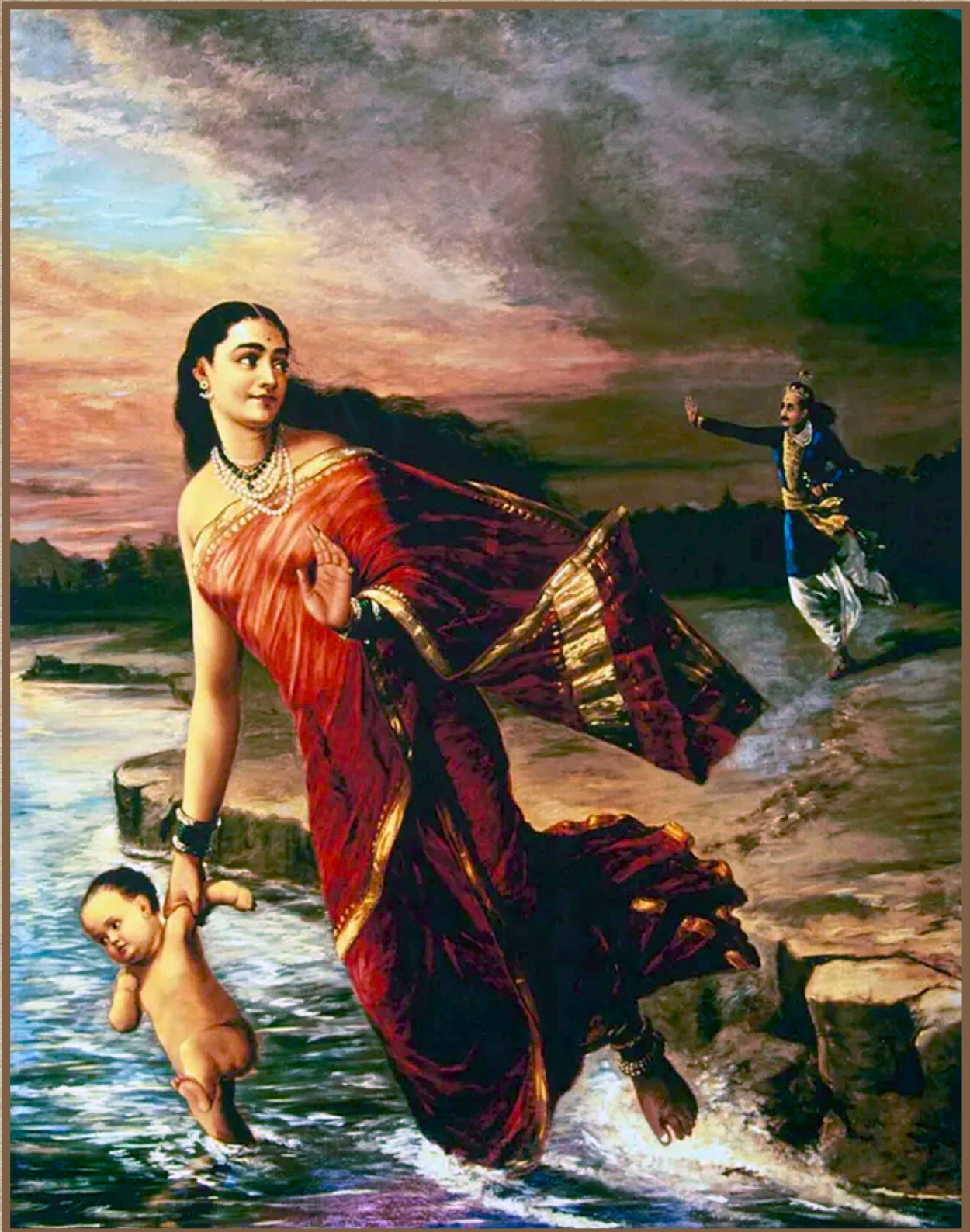
Unknown artist. Hindu Art Studio, a small Calcutta press active in the 1880's



Unknown artist. Jaipur, 18th century



Various depictions of Ganga's Makara carrier and Maharaja Bhagiratha calling for and praying to Ganga



Painting by Raja Ravi Varma, Late 1800s.

Depiction from the Mahābharata: Because they had offended the sage Vasistha, the eight demigod Vasus, sons of Dharma, had to take birth as human beings. To deliver them, Mother Ganga agreed to become the wife of Santanu on the condition that whatever she might do, no one must stop her. Ganga Devi gave birth to seven children, one after another, and threw them into the water of the Ganga so they could return to the heavenly planets. When the eighth Vasu took birth as Devavrata, and Santanu stopped Ganga Devi from throwing the child into the water, she disappeared, for that was the condition imposed by her. That child Devavrata became the great devotee Bhishmadev.

Painting by B.P. Banerjee, 1923



After Devavrata took birth, Ganga took him with her to the heavenly planets where he was trained as a warrior by the devatas. This painting portrays the time when Ganga returned to earth to hand over her now grown son Devavrata (soon to be known as Bhishma) to his father Maharaja Santanu.



Unknown photographer. Carvings are circa 725 CE.

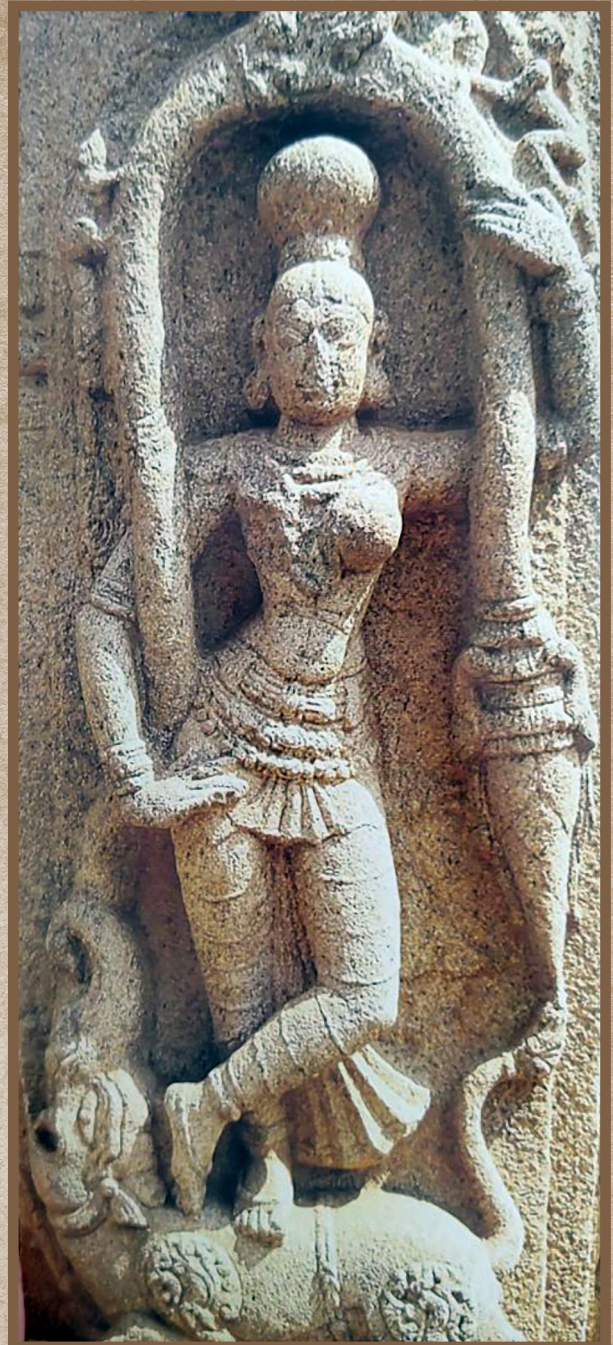


Top and right (closeup): Ganga on Makara Statue in Mahabalipuram, Mamallapuram in Raya Gopuram, Tamil Nadu

Unknown photographer. 5th century CE. Museum of Asian Art, Berlin



Above: Ganga on Makara, from Mathura.
Right: Ganga Mata on a Makara in terracotta stone. From the Char Bangla Mandir in Baranagar, West Bengal.



Unknown photographer. Carving made in 1755 CE.

TWO FROGS VISIT THE GANGA



Adapted from the Padma Purāṇa, canto 7, chapter 9

There was a religious and sweet-speaking king named Satyadharma on the earth during the junction of *Tretā* and *Dvāpara yugas*. The queen of that king was named Vijaya. She was beautiful, of good character, and highly devoted to the service of her husband. After enjoying for seven thousand years on this earth, the king and his wife died. The messengers of Yamaraj, the Lord of death, bound the couple up and took them to Yama's abode along a painful path. Seeing them, the Lord of death, who is also known as Dharmaraj, the great knower of religious principles, said to his secretary Chitrugupta, "Inform us about the behavior of these two." Thus ordered by Yamaraj, Chitrugupta considered the acts of the king and queen from the beginning of their lives, and said, "O king, please listen and I will tell the activities of these two. Once there was

a deer that had been frightened by tigers. To save its life, it left the forest and came to the assembly of the king. Seeing the deer, the king became very curious. He got up, and with his sword, struck the hip of the deer. The king struck the deer even though it had sought his shelter. Therefore, O lord, this king, along with his wife, should be punished by you. On order of Yamaraj, his messengers subjected the king and his wife in various hellish punishments after which they took birth again on the earth as male and female frogs. Living on the bank of a river, always eating insects and remembering their former lives, the two were very much pained.

Once, on an auspicious day, the two frogs saw some men who were going on the path to the Ganga. The male frog told his wife, "We are always suffering pain due to the sinful acts we performed in our last human life. It is said that even great sinners can be relieved of their reactions by leaving their bodies in the Ganga. Let us undertake a pilgrimage to the Ganga in order to die and thereby cross this ocean of agony." The female frog was delighted with the suggestion, and the two of them at once set out for the bank of the Ganga.



Unknown photographer

Ganga flowing in the Himalayas near Rishikesh



Photo by Sanak Sanatan Das

Kedar-tal, or Lord Shiva's lake, lies at 4,750 m (15,600 ft). It is the origin of the Kedar Ganga, which flows down to Gangotri and meets the Bhagirathi-Ganga near the Surya-kund waterfall.

On the way they came across a poisonous and fearful serpent that had gone hungry for a long time. The deadly snake said, “O sinful frogs, your time of death has arrived. Therefore, you should be eaten by me, as I am very hungry.”

The couple spoke with reverence, “O serpent! There is not the slightest fear of death in our hearts! Formerly, I was a king named Satyadharma. This was my queen named Vijaya. Due to our sins we experienced pain for a long time in the abode of Yamaraj. To experience the remaining fruit of our karma, we took birth as frogs. We desire to go to the highest abode. For that purpose, we are going to the bank of Ganga to cast our bodies into her. O serpent, how much pleasure will you have by devouring us? Vishnu dwells in our hearts. In the same way Vishnu also dwells in your heart. Therefore, what enmity do

we have with you, O serpent? The wise never harm other living beings.”

The snake said, “If killing others is truly a major sin, then why has the creator fashioned some living entities as prey and others as predators to eat them? That same god who created you, and who has protected you, today is using me as the instrument to kill you.”

The serpent then ate those frogs on the path, who were intently uttering, “Ganga, Ganga”. On every step of their pilgrimage to the Ganga, those two had obtained the fruits of performing horse-sacrifices.

This chapter of the *Padma Purāṇa* describes the wonderful benefits obtained by someone who even unsuccessfully tries to go the Ganga:

*jāhnavī-tīra-yātrāyām daivād yasya bhavet pathi
pañcatā so 'pi paramam dhāma-gacchen na saṁśayaḥ*



Photo by Madhavananda Das

Ganga Devi is one of the doorkeepers at the medieval Nandini Math in Jagannath Puri

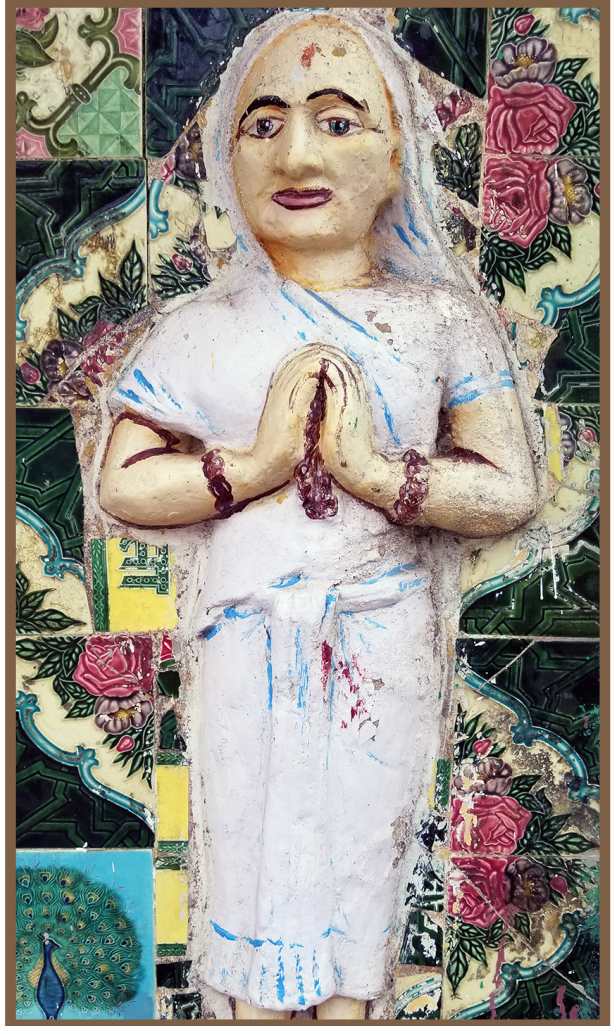


Photo by Madhavananda Das

Deity of Ganga Devi at Narendra Sarovar in Jagannath Puri

There is no doubt that anyone who dies on the path when on pilgrimage to the Ganga will go to the highest abode. (Texts 77-78)

Great sages like Narada have declared that there is no restriction of time on going to the Ganga. Whenever a person takes bath in the Ganga they certainly obtain inexhaustible religious merit. The Ganga destroys all sins. However, if a person repeatedly commits sin, the Ganga does not purify them. If one desires the highest goal of life, then, giving up wicked thoughts, bathe in the Ganga, the mother of the world. It is possible to count the number of raindrops and dust particles on the earth, but it is not possible to completely describe the glories of the Ganga. (154-159) 🍊

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- Padma Purāṇa. English translation. Motilal Banarshidass. 1990. Delhi.
- Padma Purāṇa. Nag Publishers. 2003. Delhi. Sanskrit.

DON'T DO BUSINESS ON GANGA-YATRA

Padma Purāṇa 7.9.28-30

gaṅgā-yātrā su-kartavyam nānyat karma-vicakṣaṇaiḥ
gaṅgā-tīre prayāge tu vāñijya-pramukhāni ca

kāryāṇi kurute yas tu tat puṇyārddham vinaśyati
janma janmārjitaṁ pāpaṁ svalpaṁ vā yadi vā bahu

gaṅgā devī prasādena sarvaṁ meyāsy ati kṣayam
ity uktvā parama-prītaḥ prājño gaṅgā taṭaṁ vrajet

Wise persons should not undertake any other work during pilgrimages to the Ganga. One who engages in business or trade on the bank of the Ganga or at Prayaga loses half of their religious merit. “All my sins, great or small, that have been committed in life after life will perish simply by the mercy of the Goddess Ganga.” Saying this, a wise person should with great delight go to the bank of the Ganga.



GANGADEVI'S LOVE FOR GAURANGA



Adapted from Srila Lochan Das Thakur's
Caitanya-maṅgala ādi-khaṇḍa kaiśora-līlā

During one enchanting evening, Vishwambhar and his friends went to have darśana of the Ganga. On both banks of the river, many Brahmins and saintly devotees offered respects and prayers to Gangadevi. Village ladies came carrying waterpots on their hips. Many saintly and pious men as well as crowds of different pandits with names like Mishra, Acharya, and Bhatta, and saintly pious men, came and gazed at the pure and beautiful river. Both young and old were worshiping the Ganga with flowers, fragrances, sandalwood paste, garlands, and splendid bananas.

Overcome with love for Lord Gaura, Gangadevi could not restrain herself, and her waters rushed and spilled over her banks in order to gently touch the body of Lord Gauranga.

People wondered, “Why does the Ganga seem more beautiful today? Although she is usually calm and quiet, today she is loudly roaring and her current is swiftly surging. There are no rainclouds, yet she is flooding over her banks.”

Amongst them was a Brahmin who was a great devotee of the goddess Ganga. By Gangadevi's mercy, this pure-hearted Brahmin knew everything about the past, present, and future. Seeing the Ganga swirling in ecstasy, this Brahmin became joyful. He started meditating on the meaning of what was happening before his eyes. Suddenly he saw Lord Vishwambhar and his friends approaching the Ganga. With great love, the Lord gazed at the Ganga. The hairs of his body stood erect, his body expanded in size, and his reddish eyes filled with tears of compassion. The Brahmin understood, “He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

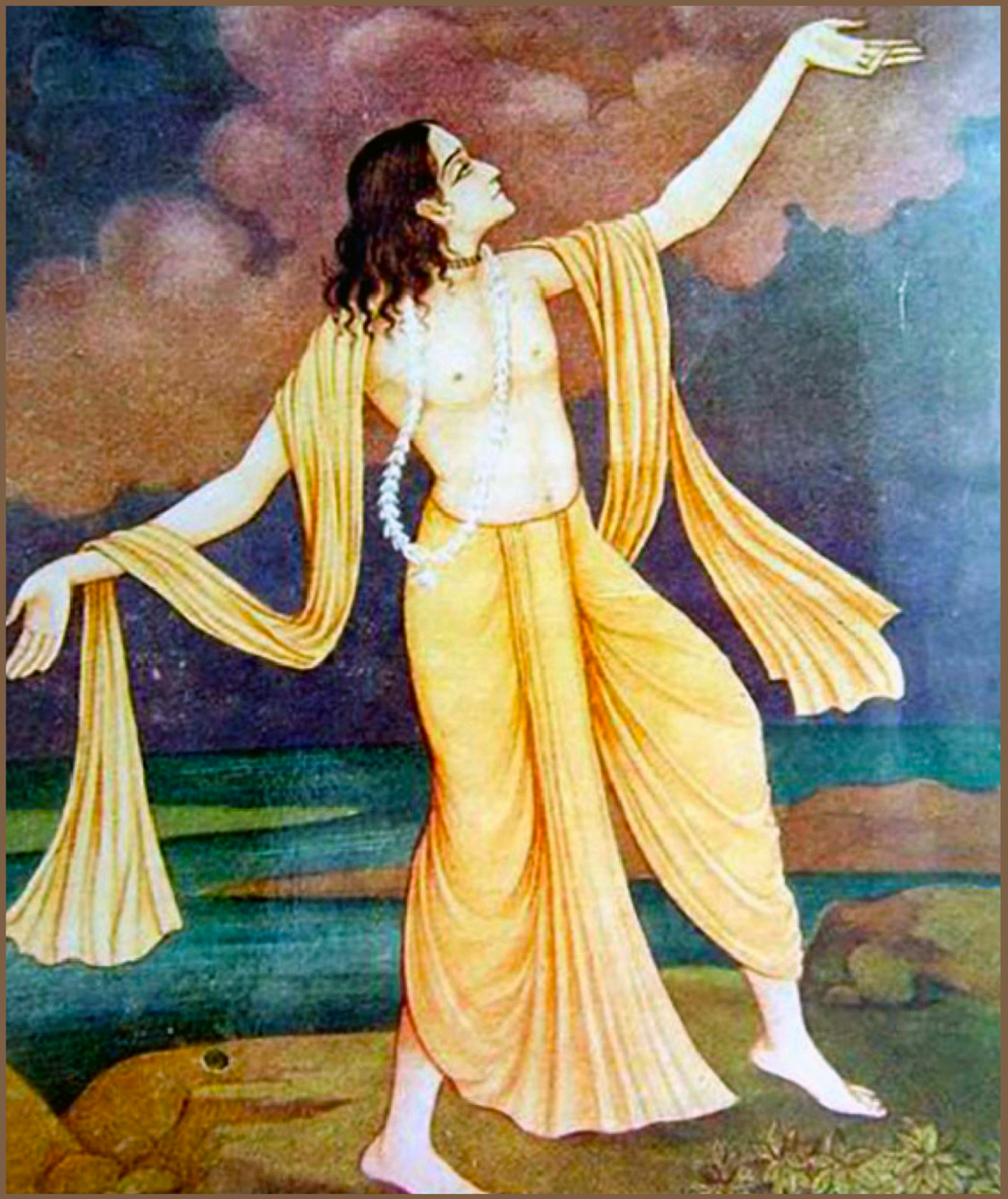
Approaching the Lord, the Brahmin fell down like a stick to offer obeisances. He saw that the Lord was overcome with love for the Goddess Ganga. Again and again, the Lord remembered the Ganga in his heart. When the Lord approached her, the Ganga touched the Lord's hands. Although she touched the Lord's hands, Gangadevi still didn't feel completely satisfied, so she splashed her waves

across the lotus feet of the Lord. Filled with ecstasy,
Lord Gauraranga shouted, “Haribol!”

*prabhu anurāge gaṅgā hiyāmājhe rahe
śata dhārā jala āṅkhi-sāgarete bahe*

*lome lome bahe nīra — loka bole gharma
uthalila premasindhu — drava-maya brahma*

Filled with love, Goddess Ganga embraced Lord Gaura to her chest. The tears from her eyes flowed towards the ocean in a hundred currents. Her pure waters flow from each hair on Gauranga’s body. Although the people call it perspiration, it is the rising ocean of ecstatic love, the pure spiritual nature in liquid form. (Texts 25-26)



Unknown artist.

Nimai Pandit on the bank of the Ganga



Unknown artist. Early Bengali School. Mid 19th Century

Prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana with Mahaprabhu and his associates in Nabadwip on the bank of the Ganga

In all directions, everyone ecstatically chanted, “Hari Haribol!” With blissful waves, the Ganga became a rising ocean of ecstatic love. The people of Nadiya were all filled with wonder. Only the Brahmin devotee of the Ganga understood what was happening. That Brahmin saw Vishwambhar as the Supreme Personality of Godhead with the Ganga overflowing as she gazed at him with ecstatic love. Falling at Lord Vishwambhar’s feet, in a voice choked with emotion, the Brahmin said, “On this day, goddess Ganga has truly given her mercy to me. With my own eyes I now see the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whom even the kings of the yogis and the kings of the sages cannot see in their trance of meditation.” He rolled on the ground and loudly wept. Overcome with the ecstasy of love, that Brahmin forgot himself. 🍊

**SHIVA'S KIRTANA
AS THE SOURCE
OF THE GANGA**



Continuing from the above story:

Casting a glance at the Brahmin overcome with ecstatic love, Lord Gaura, his heart filled with joy, returned to his home. Everyone, please hear what the Brahmin then spoke, his words describing the goddess

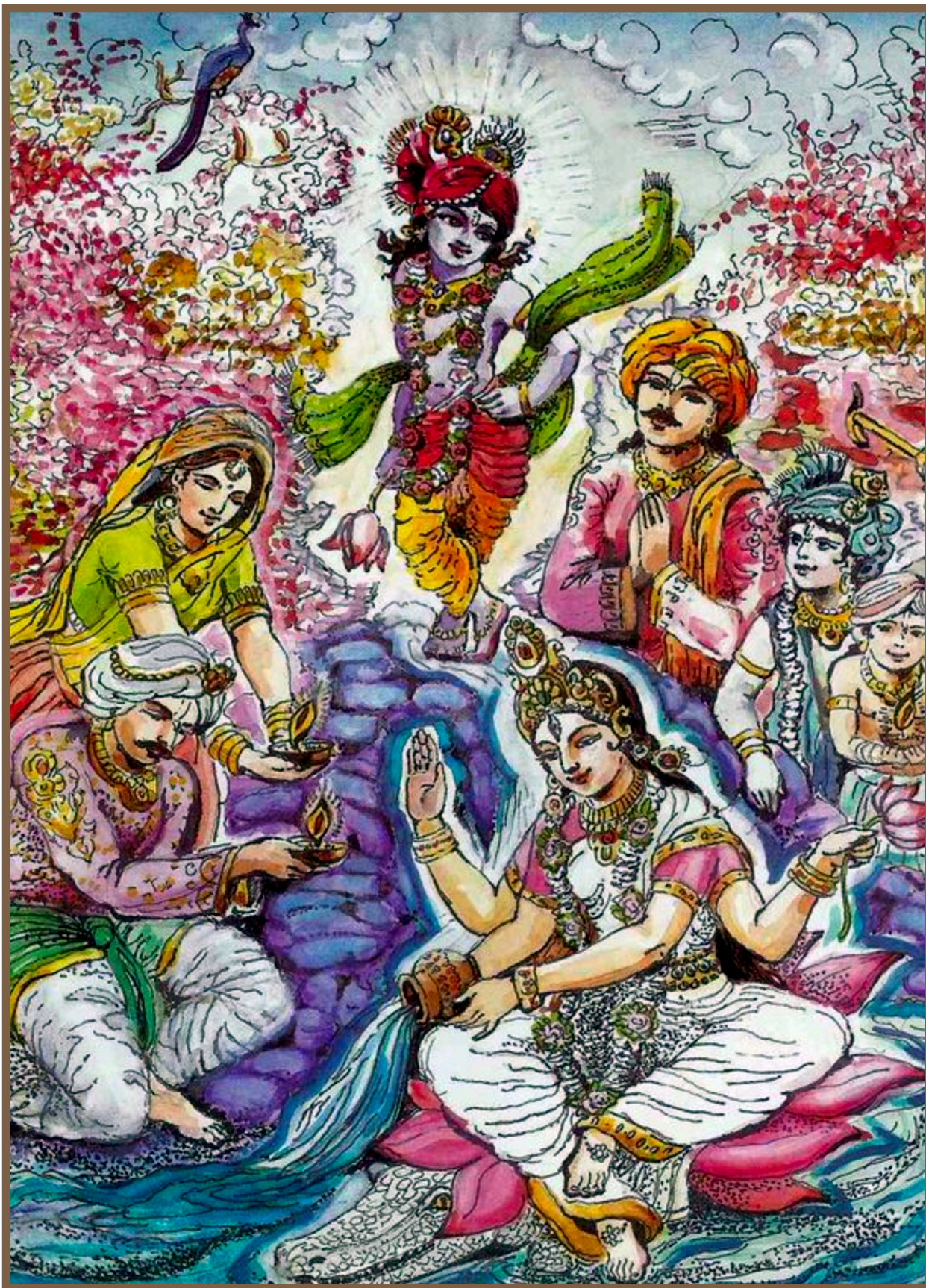
Ganga’s birth. He said, “I will tell you why Gangadevi has now risen so high. One day, Lord Shiva was filled with bliss while chanting Krishna’s glories. Narada Muni came and began playing on his *vīṇa* and singing with him. Then Ganesh arrived and began playing on a *mṛdaṅga* drum. In ecstasy their bodies erupted in goose bumps from head to toe. The sounds of their *kīrtana* pierced the coverings of the material universe.

“Overcome with ecstasy, Krishna came there. He told the three of them, ‘Please don’t sing like this. Shiva, please listen. You don’t know what happens when you sing like this. When you sing like this my body cannot remain stable. My body will melt.’

“Hearing Krishna’s words, Mahadeva laughed and said, ‘I will see if that is the truth.’ Then Mahesh began to sing with even more fervor. His singing gradually filled the whole material universe. Suddenly, Krishna’s body began to melt. Frightened, Shiva stopped singing and the Lord stopped melting. The part of Krishna that melted became famous in the worlds as *kāruṇya-jala*, the water of Lord Krishna’s mercy.

*sei drava-brahma-nāma karuṇāra jala
tīrtharūpī janārdana goṣaye sakala*

“The part of Krishna that melted became known as *drava-brahma*, liquid spirit. It was full of compassion, the embodiment of Lord Janardan, and a great place of pilgrimage. (Text 48)



Unknown artist.

The Ganga comes from the body of Sri Krishna

Ślokāmṛta



WATER AND WOOD TWO FORMS OF TRANSCENDENCE



Cc. madhya 15.134-135

Out of his causeless mercy, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave the following directions to the brothers Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and Vidya-vachaspati:

‘dāru’-jala’-rūpe krishna prakāṣa samprati
‘daraśana’-‘snāne’ kare jīvera mukati

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, “In this Age of Kali, Krishna is manifest in two forms—wood and water. Thus, by enabling the conditioned souls to see the wood and bathe in the water, he helps them become liberated.

‘dāru-brahma’-rūpe—sākṣāt śrī-puruṣottama
bhāgīrathī hana sākṣāt ‘jala-brahma’-sama

“Lord Jagannath is the Supreme Lord himself in the form of wood, and the river Ganges is the Supreme Lord himself in the form of water.

“That water is very, very rare in this world. Lord Brahma carefully kept it in his *kamaṇḍalu*, waterpot.

To favor his dear devotee Bali Maharaja, Krishna later manifested himself in his dwarf form of Vamanadev. The Lord begged three steps of land from Bali Maharaja. With his first step, Lord Vamanadev covered the earth planet, his second step covered the

universe and he put his final step on Bali’s head. No one else is as merciful as Krishna. His mercy blessed everyone in the three worlds. The water flowing from his toenails filled the material universe. With great love, Lord Brahma worshiped that water. The people of this world therefore call the Ganga *tripāda-sambhavā* — the water born from Krishna’s third step.

The Brahmin continued, “With your own eyes, everyone please gaze at Lord Vishwambhar Mahaprabhu, who is the Supreme Lord himself.”

The Brahmin explained, “When Gangadevi saw Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu she remembered these pastimes, and in ecstatic love she overflowed her banks. Lord Vishwambhar lovingly gazed at the Ganga’s waters. Then, on the pretext of making great waves, Gangadevi tenderly caressed Vishwambhar’s lotus feet. Goddess Ganga explained all this to me.” 🍊

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